

Mar 13th, 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM

Metaplan: A Mutual Methodology for Interdisciplinary Research

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Recommended Citation

Anderson, Gina; Dunlap, Karen; Rademacher, Joyce; and McMenemy, Nancy, "Metaplan: A Mutual Methodology for Interdisciplinary Research" (2009). *SoTL Commons Conference*. 104.

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Metaplan: A Mutual Methodology for Interdisciplinary Research

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Discovering Common Interests...

- Nursing/Teaching common concern
- Preparation of students for advanced courses
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Critical Thinking
 - Communication (Oral Competency)
 - Essential Basic Intellectual Competencies (THECB)

Research Study

- Student Perceptions of Preparedness for Upper Division Courses in Their Chosen Field of Teaching and Nursing
- Theoretical Perspective
 - Interpretivism
 - Sociocultural Theory

Research Question

- How do upper-division pre-service teacher and nursing students perceive their preparedness to succeed in their professional courses?

Participants

- Two focus groups; 12 Pre-service teachers and 12 nursing students
- Nursing Student Demographics
 - 1 male, 11 female
 - 6 European-Americans, 3 African-Americans, 1 Hispanic, 2 Asians
 - Ages 24-53
 - G.P.A. range 3.0-3.9
- Pre-service Teacher Demographics
 - 1 male, 11 female
 - 9 European-Americans, 1 Asian
 - Ages 24-61
 - G.P.A. range 2.8-4.0

Methodology

- MetaPlan
 - A systematic method for collecting ideas from a group of people who are working together.
 - Initiated by Schnelle & Stoltz (1987) in Hamburg, Germany.
 - Used by Hallmark, Inc. for research and development
 - Incorporates a moderator and focus groups

Benefits and Challenges

- **MetaPlan Benefits**
 - Involves all people who play a part in the implementation
 - Stimulates a variety of ideas
 - Allows multiple points of view
 - Interdisciplinary collaboration
 - Supports change initiatives and interconnectedness analysis
 - Alignment with State Reform Initiatives

Benefits and Challenges (2)

- MetaPlan Challenges
 - Time consuming
 - Preparation
 - Asking the right questions
 - Recruiting students
 - Multiple focus groups
 - Geographical issues
 - Data Analysis--multiple level process
 - Cards
 - Comments
 - Rating scale tabulation
 - Category Collapsing

MetaPlan Steps (I)...

- The question is stated.
- The participants write thoughts and feelings on notecards.
- Participants write clearly and neatly. Misspellings are allowed.
- Write one idea per card.
- Use seven words or less if possible.

Metaplan Steps (2)

- Moderator collects and reads notecards aloud and displays them on the wall.
- Moderator, with participant's help, organizes the notecards into clusters or categories of thought, feelings, and opinions.
- Participants may continue writing their thoughts during this process.
- The moderator and participants discuss their thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
- The participants conclude the process by rating the categories according to how they feel about the importance of each category.

Focus Group Questions

- How do pre-service teachers and nursing students describe the _____ (reading, writing, speaking, critical thinking) experiences from their core curriculum that contributes to their current success in upper-division courses?
- What do pre-service teachers and nursing students say that university faculty can do to better prepare them for their chosen profession?

Tentative Results

- Reading – both Teacher Education (TE) and Nursing (N) students both perceive a need in outlining, speed-reading, memory enhancement, and comprehension
- Writing – Both TE and N perceive a need for more consistent faculty expectations and more opportunities to learn about professional writing formats and assignment variety.

Tentative Results (2)

- Speaking – Both TE and N perceive the need for more speaking opportunities and specific strategies to apply to these types of assignments.
- Critical Thinking – Both TE and N perceive a need for more specific activities that relate to their professions. Based on their responses, the researchers also believe the students lack an understanding of what critical thinking means.

Overall Conclusions

- There is a need for clear faculty expectations, specific reading, writing, and speaking instruction, more assignment variety, and a clearer understanding of critical thinking and its application.

A very brief demo...

- Research question: What are the methods (assignments, strategies) you use to assess critical thinking in your courses?
- Category creation
- Category rating (Likert 1-7)
- Mean determination
- Results

Implementation Ideas

- Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies – university-wide study
- Other ideas?

Parting Thoughts...

“We need to create programs that bring us together structurally in some cases, intellectually and emotionally in others....Learning communities are one way that we may build the commonalities and connections so essential to our education and our society.”

-- *Learning Communities: Creating Connections Among Students, Faculty, and Disciplines;*
Gabelnick, et al., 1990 p. 92

References

- Schnelle, W., & Stoltz, I. (1987). *The metaplan method: Communication tools for planning learning groups* (Metaplan Series No. 7). Goethestrasse, Germany.